

# The Golden Times



Respect, Equality, Courage, Responsibility,  
Integrity, Ambition and Kindness

**One Family,  
Many Lives**

IN THE GOLDEN THREAD ALLIANCE





Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome to the first Golden Thread Alliance newsletter, where we have tried to give you all a taster of each school within our newly merged family.

It is my absolute honour to be the leader of our Trust. For those of you who have just known their Trust as “Galaxy” or “Pathway,” the new identity of “The Golden Thread Alliance” is meant to signify a group of schools, working together (in an Alliance) but sharing a core set of common values, that run through each school, like a “Golden Thread.”

Since September when we began working together much more closely, I have really enjoyed getting to know the schools in Gravesham. Only today, I spent a wonderful day at the Riverview Schools – speaking with teachers, support staff, leaders and the awesome children. They are an absolute credit to you and their schools! I am looking forward to seeing each school this term, learning more about the brilliant learning that is going on in each setting.

Our Trust (and myself as the leader) will commit to continuing the development of each school with a very clear focus on maintaining their own unique character and keeping things in the schools which make them special for the children, families and staff within each school. We will however, use our strength in numbers to make efficiencies in the “business” side of our organisation – using any savings to directly re-invest in to each school and for the benefit of each child.

It is a humbling experience every day to speak with staff across our nine schools, and to hear their reasons for working in school. At a meeting today, with a range of staff, it was pretty emotional to hear the countless reasons WHY people have chosen to dedicate their professional lives to education. It’s a tough time to be in education – our support staff deserve higher pay, and our teachers are right to be fighting for pay that not only keeps up with inflation, but is actually reflective of the near-impossible job they do each and every day. Yet, still, today, I heard about the senior leader who had worked within a Trust school since the early 2000’s and had progressed from being a newly qualified teacher, to now being an Assistant Head. I heard about the Finance Assistant that had been part of the PTA prior to becoming a member of staff. Every member of staff has their own story, their own motivation, their own strengths and their own challenges. Regardless of their story though, I am lucky that each colleague has chosen to be part of education, and to be part of our Trust.

I look forward, over the coming weeks and months, to getting to know the staff and children across our nine schools, now known as The Golden Thread Alliance.

Garry Ratcliffe  
Chief Executive Officer



Dear Parents and Carers,

It gives me great pleasure to be writing in the first Golden Thread newsletter! It has certainly been a busy term and I cannot believe we are already hurtling towards the end of Term 3 – Christmas seems a lifetime ago! Although the official merger date of the two former Trusts becoming The Golden Thread Alliance, was 1st January 2023, a lot of work has been going on behind the scenes for some time to ensure the process and end result was as smooth as possible. This certainly didn't happen by magic, a lot of the thanks has to go to our Deputy Chief Operating Officer – Victoria Windus who led on the project throughout and made it as seamless as possible for all involved – Thank you Victoria!

Back in early 2018 the Central Business Team consisted of myself, and at the time, the Finance Manager – Mikala Hannaway. At that point, The Trust had just taken on West Hill and Mikala and I were leading on the business and finance functions for three schools. It's only been in the last two years that the central team has grown to what it is now and the thought of how we have progressed and grown, makes me hugely proud. As part of the merger process we incorporated 4 Finance Assistants and a HR Officer, this will only add more strength to the team. As the central team grows, so does our wealth of knowledge, expertise and support for the schools, which positively impacts on our school leaders and teachers - meaning they can get on with what they do best - ensuring the best possible outcomes for our children!

I have been visiting all the “Pathway” schools during this term and one thing that stood out and I was delighted to see was, the collaborative work that is already taking place, not just in teaching and learning but in relation to the School Business Managers, admin teams and site teams too.

Whilst it's a busy and exciting time for us all in relation to the recent merger, I have been busy working on an environmental strategy for all of our 9 schools within The Trust. The UK government's Net Zero strategy for the education sector in sustainability is a Net Zero target by 2030. In light of this, I have been looking at different strategies in how we can meet the government's target and reduce our carbon footprint. Including but not limited to - LED lighting throughout, electric charging points for staff and visitors, and solar panels. I am absolutely keen for us to ensure the children are involved in this exciting project, and as a starting point I want to involve them in monitoring energy consumption in their schools; this will enable them to see that the choices we make day to day, can have a huge impact on energy savings and sustainability. Once I write again I hope to have more information for you on how this is progressing.

I look forward to spending more time in the schools over the coming months getting to know and working alongside the staff and children.

Claire Misy  
Chief Operating Officer & Chief Financial Officer



### FOREST SCHOOL

Here at CGPS the children have really been enjoying taking part in their new Forest School provision. They have taken part in learning a new range of skills including Whittling wood, Den building, and how to safely start a fire (which was very important for roasting our marshmallows). They have embraced the opportunity to learn new skills and use tools, as well as working together collaboratively to take part in challenges and managed risks. Many of the children have loved the opportunity to get creative, using the natural resources to produce some excellent pieces of work including Gods Eyes, hand warmers, conker reindeers and their own replicas of some of our staff as conker people. We look forward to the different opportunities and experiences that Forest School brings in the future.



### SCHOOL LIBRARY

At Culverstone Green, we are fortunate to have a beautiful and spacious library, as well as shared year group areas, which hold hundreds of books across a range of authors and genres. Keeping the library organised and tidy is very important so that every pupil can find and enjoy a reading book.

Therefore, we are very pleased to welcome our new 2023 team of CGPS Librarians! To become a librarian at our school, each pupil had to complete an application form explaining why they would be good at the job and show their passion for books and reading. The school librarians are a team of fantastic pupils from year 3 to 5 who love to read and help to inspire others to read. Every week, the librarians dedicate some of their lunchtime to keeping our beautiful library tidy and organised, as well as recommending books to other pupils and making sure that the library is used respectfully.



Back in November, Culverstone Green Girls won the Kent Regional Qualifiers allowing them to qualify for the Zone 7 regional finals to be hosted in Morpeth. Last weekend, the team travelled up to London and had a fantastic day playing a range of schools from across the South of England. After some hard fought matches, the team finished in a superb third place - narrowly missing out on qualifying for the next round in Bristol. A huge thank you to Miss Mole for attending and Mr Burbeck for organising the event as well as the parents who travelled along with the children. Well done girls, we are incredibly proud of your achievements!

## Fleetdown Primary Academy



Hello Parents and Carers,  
Welcome back to another year at Fleetdown. We are looking forward to the upcoming events at Fleetdown as we continue to embed our new curriculum. We have some amazing trips and events planned and so far have seen our children experience bikeability, swimming lessons and a variety of workshops.

We hope you will join us for some of our upcoming workshops and look forward to seeing you all soon.

One of our amazing Early Years teachers, Rajinder Hothi, and our Assistant Head Vikki Coombes, recently held a Read Write Inc and Early Reading parent workshop. During this workshop, we explained the structure of RWI to parents and careers. We explained the importance of reading a book 3 times. The first for accuracy, the second for fluency and the third for understanding. We also explained how we learn the sounds within words and how we use our Fred Fingers to help us then spell these words within our written words.

### Recent Events:

- 9-23rd Feb - Year 6 Bikeability
- 6th Feb - Children's Mental Health Week
- 7th Feb - Safer Internet day
- 10th Feb - Last Day of term



We have had a superb start to the year at Fleetdown with all of the children enjoying their new topics. Our Reception children have had a wonderful time reading 'The Tiger Who Came to Tea' and experiencing this on stage at The Orchard Theatre in Dartford. They have also had a very chilly picnic at Darenth Country Park where they enjoyed yummy milkshakes!

## Meopham Community Academy



Our OPAL (Outdoor Play and Learning) programme is continuing to develop, and it has been a joy to watch how the children use their imagination in play. The OPAL programme supports schools to create happier playtimes, design better play spaces and enable staff to support wonderful play.

The big one has now arrived - the much talked about zip wire is up and running and it has proved to be a bit hit! Thank you to the PTA and parent support for all your fundraising efforts to make this happen.

This adds to the different play zones available for the children to enjoy, including tree climbing, tyre zone, balance zone, digging area, dressing up and the mud kitchen. The different zones provide the children with the opportunity to explore various elements of play, risk and creativity. Some of our Year 5 pupils will be taking on the role of Play Rangers this term, becoming role models for play and the principles of OPAL. We look forward to seeing them in action.



### Mini Meophams Update

This term at Mini Meophams our topic is 'Our World'. We have been learning all about the world we live in, starting very close to home! To start this topic, we looked at pictures of our own houses and discussed what they look like and how they are different. The children then drew pictures of their houses, built them using bricks or made them out of junk modelling, which is a new skill that they have learnt. We then moved on to learning about our local area and what is in it. To help the children with this, we went for a walk through the village ending at the park. We had a fantastic time, despite the cold! When we returned, we spoke about all the things we saw on our walk and it's been lovely to hear the children making reference to these places when speaking about where they live or role playing going on trips of their own. We used this knowledge in our learning in class, looking at maps of where we live and making our own, which of course always led us to treasure - usually in the park! We will be spending the rest of the term learning more about our own planet on which we live.



## Team Purple

Oakfield is a 3-form entry school, with the addition of its own amazing Nursery and Specialist Resource Provision for children who have ASD. We have a real team ethos at Oakfield – by working together and maintaining positive working relationships we aim to get the best from every child, parent, carer and staff member. A Primary school career is a long 7 years, it is important that you invest in the right school for your child. Everyone within Team Purple is considered to be important and play a key role in ensuring we get the best for our children; from the IT team, to the site team, the kitchen staff, teaching team and office.

### Relationships are key!

We have an incredibly nurturing approach at Oakfield. By getting to know every child inside out and back to front, we get to know what they like and dislike. Once children are at school, more hours of their day are spent with their teacher than anyone else. Therefore, this approach really matters to us. A child that feels happy and safe will want to work. We want our children to reach their full academic potential and the teaching team work very hard to ensure this. Ultimately, we want them to be 'good' human beings that celebrate the diverse world we live in, showing empathy and sympathy on world matters, but not afraid to share their opinions in a respectful manner too. Everyone matters and relationships are key!



### Early Years

We have recently invested a considerable amount into our Early Years outdoor provision. By spending £50,000 on equipment to enhance learning and ensure our youngest members of Team Purple have solid foundations we intend for their journey to go from strength to strength. If we can 'get it right' with our little people then it can only bode well for their futures.



### Inclusivity

We are an Inclusion Quality Mark accredited school, with the highest status achieved; Flagship. It is a real celebration that via rigorous monitoring from external agencies we have been awarded this status. It recognises and celebrates our highly inclusive ethos. Every child, regardless of their need is fully supported to achieve their potential.

### Reading is VITAL!

We place great emphasis on the importance of reading at Oakfield. It is simple; if you cannot read, you cannot access life. We really need parents and carers to be fully engaged on this part of their child's journey. Evidence suggests that children who read for enjoyment every day not only perform better in reading tests than those who don't, but also develop a broader vocabulary, increased general knowledge and a better understanding of other cultures. In fact, reading for pleasure is more likely to determine whether a child does well at school than their social or economic background. We have been working hard to ensure our children have the best possible chances to be successful, confident readers

# RIVERVIEW INFANT SCHOOL



## Forest School

As always, our Forest School has been a huge success this year and we are always pleased with the amount of parents who turn up to join us! We are passionate about this child-centred learning process, which provides learner inspired, hands-on experiences in the natural environment. It's creative and can increase a child's confidence as they problem-solve and learn to manage risks. Forest School encourages all children to explore the natural environment and learn in it. All children from Reception to EYFS visit every term!

## Inclusion

We have been working closely with Riverview Juniors to offer opportunities to support parents of children with SEND. Mrs Booker and Mrs Jones have been busy reviewing past processes and creating new ways for parents to have clear communication with the school. We have started new parent coffee mornings, workshops and re-started the amazing reading cafe! We are also arranging for some of our children to visit Curley's Farm next term to help out on the farm!



## Good to be Green

We have had huge success with the launch of our new behaviour strategy. Good 2B Green is a consistent approach to managing the school's expectations in a positive way. All children are enjoying receiving Headteacher's stickers and earning points to hopefully win the trophy for their team!

Every child is excited to find out what the next end of term treat will be! We are also really excited to now be part of The Golden Thread Alliance - Mr James Bernard [Interim Head of School]





# Riverview Junior School

## Connectivity



Riverview Junior School has been working closely with the Infant School to provide the best possible learning experiences for all of the Riverview children! This has included the use of the amazing Forest School for outdoor learning, our Riverview Farm (which will soon include the cute pygmy goats!), and our brand-new state of the art Learning Hub & Sensory Room. It has been wonderful to see staff and pupils from across both schools coming together to create memorable experiences for all our pupils.



Our pupils are rewarded for showing the core values of Excellence, Respect, Responsibility, Resilience, and Teamwork. They receive points, wristbands and certificates for all of their hard work as we come together each week to celebrate as a school. This year, our pupils have earned a whopping 6,200 points! They should all be very proud of their contribution to ensuring this is a happy and memorable place to come to each and every day. Well done to everyone in Copperfield, Nickleby, Pickwick, and Weller. You are all amazing!

## Active play and Clubs



Riverview Junior School has continued our active play provision this year. Lunchtimes in the school involve a plethora of fun activities led by our wonderful sports leaders and midday supervisors. Basketball, chess, football, the ever popular 4-square and more are just some of the activities available to our pupils as we continue to stress the importance of living active and healthy lifestyles. As always, our clubs have been incredibly popular with many of our children enjoying boxing, film club, multi-skills, and our brand-new parent/pupil active club. There will be many more activities as the year progresses, especially as the warmer weather heads our way!



# Temple Hill Primary Academy

An Exceptional Place To Learn

Hi everyone! Leon Dawson, Head of School, here. It's great to be part of The Golden Thread Alliance of awesome schools. Here's a few things happening here!



## CurricuColour Effort Faces



## CurricuColour Ladder



Almost every lesson at Temple Hill runs with our CurricuColour system of planning and assessment. Children have tasks related to colours and self-assess against them in almost all lessons including English, maths, PE, history, art, DT.... Thank you AT Tracy Morris for the updated posters!

Our Food Project is going great this year. We partner with local food outlets and share free food with our families and staff. We also have our reasonably priced recipe bags, anything we don't use is shared with the local community. Thanks especially to Jodie Humphreys FLO for driving this!



After 14 years of trying to make the main road outside of the school safe, our new one-way system is up and running and what a difference it has made to the start of our school day. Thank you so much Governor Darren Povey for all that you do and our amazing Councillor Kelly Grehan for your incredible support too!

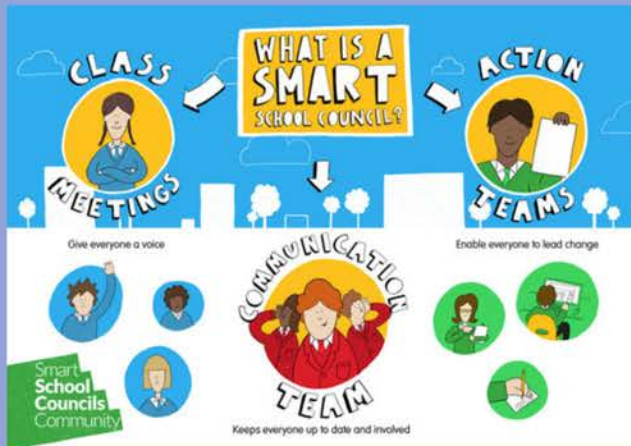


Thank you to Team Temple Hill, our small but aiming to grow PTA team, for our new reading, writing and maths star trophies, particularly Sarah, Maz, Louise and Vicky. Parents and Carers, your child may come home saying they were the star today, support as usual but if they then produce the trophy – make sure it comes back in to school – the idea is they are kept in school, ideally on their desk when working for that day!



Our vision at West Hill is to aim to inspire our children to be ambitious, confident and active learners through high-quality teaching and learning opportunities. Our safe and inclusive environments and staff work together to enable children to become lifelong learners. We nurture and celebrate individuality.

We reflect our diverse community through our curriculum. For example, the school have learnt about China and the Lunar New Year celebration. We ended this short theme with a school new year parade inviting parents and carers to join the fun.



West Hill has a **Smart School Council**. This approach firmly places school development in the hands of the children. The children lead the meetings in their class and feed back to the communication team. We look forward to seeing what this year holds!



Building learning power is used through out the school from Reception, in the form of the achievosaurus to year 6. This approach supports children in developing and talking about their learning.





Welcome back to a new term at Wrotham Road Primary School. It has been wonderful to see the children rush through the doors as we start a new year. Each class has now launched their new IPC topic with a bang, for example, Year 3 began their topic of 'Island Life' by coming in on the first day dressed as if they were going on an island holiday! Everyone shared their current knowledge and then took part in a variety of activities, such as: map-making; how to survive on a deserted island; and designing and creating our own boats. This term we are now all full steam ahead with our enrichment calendar and the House Captains have gathered the pupils across the school together to discuss the plans for the coming year.

## SURF SCHOOL WORKSHOP



Pupils in Key Stage 2 were lucky to have **Broadstairs Surf School** visit us this term. They 'hit the surf' and carried out balance board workshops for pupils in Year 4, 5 & 6.

Everybody had the opportunity to 'pop-up' and sort out their *goofy* from their *regular* whilst fending off imaginary shark attacks and appreciating the classic music of the Beach Boys. Gnarly dude!



## HOUSE CAPTAINS ASSEMBLE!



Year 6 House Captains have held their first termly assemblies to their house mates in KS2. These gatherings give them the opportunity to introduce themselves for the first time since last term's elections. On the agenda were important issues such as: team names, house logos and discussing shared values.

House Captains already play an important part in running lunchtime clubs for Year 3 and 4 and the organisation of playground equipment in Year 5 and 6. They have been busy discussing with staff how this year's House Points competition will be organised and will be responsible for the collection of points totals each week.

Visitors to our school often remark on how well our pupils are able to articulate their love of, and pride for, our school. House Captains are a very important part of this pupil voice.

# Golden Nuggets



In October, we launched the 'Reading by 5' initiative. The main aim of this project is for children across our family of schools to be reading by the end of their Reception Year. This doesn't mean that children need to be reading long chapter books independently but more that children are beginning to learn the skills required to be a reader, using their phonic knowledge to decode words.

Being able to decode is an important part of learning to read as it helps the child know how to break a word into its sounds and blend them together to read the whole word. Children are taught these skills at school through daily phonics sessions. The hard work doesn't stop at the end of EYFS either! The English language is complex and there are a number of different ways to write the same sound. Key Stage 1, therefore, build on the foundations set by EYFS and teach children more complex sounds.



The Reading by 5 project doesn't just focus on the skills of reading. Whichever setting you visit, you will see an abundance of books for children to enjoy as well as stories being shared. Reading for pleasure is an important part of learning to read. Children become fully immersed in the stories, develop their vocabulary and learn the art of storytelling and the structure of stories. As parents, continue to share stories with your child. Re-read their favourite stories and explore new books together. Encourage that love of reading!

We have already had a number of events linked to the project, including phonics parent workshops and bedtime story sessions, amongst others. Keep an eye out for the events that your child's school may be planning linked to reading. We look forward to sharing future updates with you.

Vicki Brown - Trust English Lead  
Danielle Lewis-Egonu - Deputy CEO



**Thank you to everyone who contributed to this newsletter.**  
**Darren Stephens - Communications Manager**